

A PRACTICAL FIELD GUIDE FOR SMALL-BUSINESS OWNERS

Content That Converts

*How to turn useful ideas into attention, trust and enquiries —
without becoming a full-time content creator.*

THE FINISH LINE

Work through this guide and you
will hold four things you can act
on immediately:

- 01 A one-page content strategy
- 02 Four topics worth making
- 03 A repeatable one-page brief
- 04 A realistic 30-day plan

What's inside

01	Stop feeding the content machine	03
02	Start with people, not platforms	05
03	Give every piece a job	06
04	Choose ideas worth making	08
05	Make the answer worth keeping	10
06	Let AI assist — not impersonate	13
07	One idea, several useful encounters	14
08	Earn the email address	15
09	Measure movement, not applause	17
10	Your first 30 days	19
—	<i>The one-page content strategy</i>	21

How to use it

This is a working document, not a reading document. Every section ends in a decision you write down, and the decisions accumulate into the one-page strategy on page 21.

- READ** Ten short sections. Roughly forty minutes end to end.
- WRITE** Gold rules mark something for you to fill in. Print those pages or type into the PDF.
- RETURN** Review the strategy page monthly. Ten minutes is enough.

IF YOU ONLY DO ONE THING

Collect ten real customer questions this week (page 5). Every other decision in this guide gets easier once you have them.

O I

Stop feeding the content machine

Build a small system that earns its keep.

Most small businesses do not have a content shortage. They have a *decision* shortage: too many channels, too many possible topics, and no clear connection between publishing and a commercial result. The cure is not more output. It is a shorter list of deliberate choices, made once and revisited monthly.

THE NEW RULE

Do not ask “What should we post?”

Ask: “What does a good prospect need to understand, believe or do next?”

YOUR 90-DAY SENTENCE — WRITE IT NOW, REFINE IT LATER

Over the next 90 days, our content will help _____

to understand / believe / do _____

so that more of them _____

THREE SYMPTOMS OF A DECISION SHORTAGE

- You can list what you published last month, but not what any of it was for.
- Topics get chosen in the week they are needed.
- Nobody owns the question “did this bring anyone closer?”

The whole system — on one page

*Each step feeds the next, and the last step feeds the first.
Skip one and the loop quietly stops paying.*

1 FOCUS

One audience. One offer. One useful business outcome.

2 LISTEN

Use real questions, objections and customer language.

3 CREATE

Make one substantial asset with evidence and a point of view.

4 DISTRIBUTE

Adapt complete ideas for the channels that actually matter.

5 CONVERT

Offer one natural, low-friction next step.

6 LEARN

Review qualified attention, progress and outcomes — then focus again.

WHERE MOST SYSTEMS BREAK

Between *create* and *distribute*. The asset gets published and then abandoned, so one good idea earns one encounter instead of six.

THE SMALLEST COMPLETE LOOP

One audience, one asset, one next step, one review. Build that before you add a second channel or a second format.

HOW OFTEN TO RUN IT

Steps one and six are quarterly decisions. Steps two to five are the monthly cycle — about a day of real work.

02

Start with people, not platforms

Relevance begins before you write a word.

You do not need a fictional persona with a favourite coffee order. You need the situation that made the issue urgent, the outcome the buyer wants, what they have already tried, and what makes them hesitate.

THE TRIGGER

What happened just before they began looking for help?

THE DESIRED CHANGE

What would be different if the problem were solved?

THE FRICTION

What risk, cost or confusion could stop them acting?

THE PROOF

What would make your answer more believable?

WORKSHEET · COLLECT THIS WEEK

Ten unedited customer questions

From calls, forms, emails, reviews and Search Console. Their exact words — not your tidied version — are the raw material for every asset that follows.

01	
02	
03	
04	
05	
06	
07	
08	
09	
10	

03

Give every piece a job

A useful article is not automatically a useful marketing asset.

Content should help a buyer make one small, sensible step forward. Match the next step to their readiness: a first-time visitor rarely needs the same invitation as someone comparing three suppliers on price.

01 DISCOVER

“Is this even relevant to me?”

FORMAT

Answer · explainer

NEXT STEP

The next useful idea

02 UNDERSTAND

“What should I actually do?”

FORMAT

Guide · method

NEXT STEP

A practical tool

03 EVALUATE

“Can I trust these people?”

FORMAT

Case · comparison

NEXT STEP

Relevant proof

04 ACT

“How do I begin with you?”

FORMAT

Book · enquire

NEXT STEP

A clear action

BRIDGE, NOT AMBUSH

If the content teaches *how to choose*, the next step might be a decision checklist or a short consultation — not an unrelated sales pitch for your biggest package.

QUICK TEST

- Does the destination continue the same promise?
- Is the action obvious and proportionate?
- Will the reader know what happens after clicking?

Map one conversion path

One path, end to end. Not a funnel diagram — five sentences.

PROBLEM WE WILL ADDRESS

USEFUL CONTENT PROMISE

RELEVANT OFFER

CONCERN WE MUST REDUCE

ONE NEXT STEP

CONTENT THAT CONVERTS

A WORKED EXAMPLE

A local accountant writes “*What to check before you switch accountants*”. The promise is a calmer decision, not a discount. The offer is a fifteen-minute review of the last set of accounts. The concern is disruption at year end — so the article names it. The next step is one link: book the review.

SIGNS THE PATH IS BROKEN

- The article ends with “get in touch” and nothing else.
- The next step asks for more commitment than the reader has reason to give.
- The landing page repeats the pitch instead of continuing the promise.

O4

Choose ideas worth making

The best topic sits where customer need, distinctive knowledge and a credible next step overlap. Score every candidate out of eight before you commit a day to it.

PRIORITY

Develop topics scoring **6–8** first. Search volume cannot rescue an idea with no authority and no useful conversion path.

SCORE EACH IDEA

0 · 1 · 2 EACH

P
PROBLEM

Does a real prospect care enough about this to go looking for help?

A
AUTHORITY

Can you add experience, evidence or a genuinely useful opinion?

C
CONVERSION

Is there a natural route from this topic to a relevant offer or relationship?

E
EFFICIENCY

Can you create and reuse it without disproportionate effort?

TOTAL _____ / 8

Six places strong ideas hide

None of them require a keyword tool. All of them require paying attention.

- 01

Questions asked just before someone becomes a customer.
- 02

Mistakes that create avoidable cost, risk or delay.
- 03

Choices customers struggle to compare fairly.
- 04

Misconceptions that lead to poor decisions.
- 05

Changes — legal, technical, seasonal — that genuinely affect the audience.
- 06

Processes you can demonstrate better than competitors.

Your shortlist

SCORE WITH PACE, THEN RANK		
CUSTOMER QUESTION / TRIGGER	FORMAT	PACE
		/ 8
		/ 8
		/ 8
		/ 8
		/ 8
		/ 8
CONTENT THAT CONVERTS		09

05

Make the answer worth keeping

Useful beats impressive. Specific beats comprehensive.

Five moves, in order. Most weak content has all the information and none of the structure — it never names the cost, never promises an outcome, and never offers a move at the end.

T TENSION Name the real cost or frustration in their words.	R RESULT Promise a decision or an outcome, not a topic.	U USEFUL ANSWER Give steps, criteria or worked examples.	S SPECIFIC PROOF Add experience, evidence — and the limits of both.	T TRANSITION Offer one natural next move — and only one.
--	--	---	--	---

THE QUALITY TEST

Could a knowledgeable reader get something here that a generic summary cannot provide?

IF THE ANSWER IS NO, ADD ONE OF THESE

Evidence you gathered yourself · a client example with real numbers · a worked calculation · a tool or template · or a sharper opinion you are willing to defend.

WHICH ONE WILL YOU ADD TO YOUR NEXT ASSET?

Two openings, same subject

The opening is where most readers decide. It is also the cheapest thing in the whole system to fix.

BEFORE *generic and forgettable*

"Content marketing is more important than ever. In today's fast-paced digital world, businesses need to create engaging content..."

- Could open an article about anything.
- Describes a category, not a reader.
- Nothing to disagree with, nothing to act on.

AFTER *recognisable and useful*

"If your business publishes every week but enquiries never mention the content, the problem is probably not frequency. Start by checking whether each piece answers a buying question and points to one relevant next step."

- Names a situation the reader recognises in themselves.
- Takes a position: frequency is not the problem.
- Gives a first action inside the first fifty words.

REWRITE YOUR LAST OPENING

The one-page brief

Complete it before you open a blank document.

AUDIENCE + SITUATION

QUESTION + PROMISE

THREE USEFUL POINTS

1

 2

 3

PROOF / EXPERIENCE

FORMAT + CALL TO ACTION

CONTENT THAT CONVERTS

BEFORE YOU PUBLISH

- ☐ The title states a useful, specific, accurate promise.
- ☐ Every claim is supported, or clearly marked as opinion.
- ☐ One next step, visible without scrolling to the end.
- ☐ Read aloud once. Generic sentences become obvious.

A NOTE ON LENGTH

Write until the question is answered, then stop. A complete 900-word answer outperforms a padded 2,000-word one — for readers and for search.

06

Let AI assist — not impersonate

Efficiency is useful only while the result stays accurate, distinctive and yours.

GOOD HAND-OFFS

Cluster questions · challenge an outline · find gaps ·
create variants · check clarity

KEEP HUMAN

Judgement · confidential data · factual verification ·
lived examples · final approval

Prompt with evidence, not adjectives

Asking for “engaging, professional copy” produces the average of the internet. Give the tool the five things only you have:

CONTEXT

Who you are and who this is for.

TASK

The precise output you want back.

CONSTRAINTS

Scope, tone and explicit exclusions.

EVIDENCE

Source notes, facts, numbers and real examples.

OUTPUT

Structure, length and the call to action.

FOUR RULES THAT KEEP YOU OUT OF TROUBLE

- Ask the tool to flag uncertainty rather than invent an answer.
- Verify every claim, link, quotation, name and number yourself.
- Read the final draft aloud — generic language becomes obvious.
- Never paste sensitive customer data into an unapproved service.

07

One strong idea, several useful encounters

Distribution is part of the content — not the task you remember afterwards.

EXTRACT	ADAPT IT AS	THE JOB IT DOES
Core answer	Website article or service-page section	Search + conversion
Strong lesson	Email note or LinkedIn post	Reach + trust
Three-step method	Carousel, graphic or short video	Understanding + saves
Customer objection	FAQ entry or sales follow-up	Reduce friction
Evidence or result	Case-study excerpt	Build confidence
Practical tool	Checklist or worksheet	Grow the relationship

YOUR NEXT ASSET

DO LESS, BETTER

One strong idea distributed well is usually worth more than five disconnected posts created to fill a calendar.

08

Earn the email address

A lead magnet must solve a meaningful slice of the problem — not merely advertise your expertise.

Four moments decide whether the exchange feels fair. Get any one of them wrong and the address you collect is worth very little.

1 PROMISE A specific outcome the right visitor recognises immediately.	2 PREVIEW Show the tools, pages or decisions that are actually inside.	3 DELIVERY Immediate, mobile-friendly access with clear expectations.	4 CONTINUATION One useful email that helps them actually apply the resource.
--	--	---	--

The landing-page test

- ☐ Can a visitor tell who it is for in five seconds?
- ☐ Does the headline describe a result, not “the ultimate guide”?
- ☐ Does the page show what is inside rather than claim to be comprehensive?
- ☐ Does the form request only what you will use?
- ☐ Is consent clear and separate where required?
- ☐ Does the thank-you page give one sensible next action?

DRAFT YOUR PROMISE

THE OUTCOME IT DELIVERS

WHO IT IS NOT FOR

A call to action that feels natural

Three parts, in this order. Most calls to action carry only the first.

Action + Immediate value + What happens next

WORKED EXAMPLE

“Get the one-page planning template. We’ll email the guide immediately, followed by practical content and SEO advice you can unsubscribe from at any time.”

WHY IT WORKS

It names one thing, delivers it now, and tells the reader exactly what lands in their inbox afterwards — including how to stop it. Nothing is left to be discovered later.

NOW WRITE YOURS

ACTION

IMMEDIATE VALUE

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

09

Measure movement, not applause

The aim is not more numbers. It is better decisions.

A view means nothing on its own: who saw the asset, what they did next, and whether that behaviour supports the commercial objective.

ATTRIBUTION REALITY

Combine analytics with enquiry-source questions, CRM notes, replies and sales conversations. Look for patterns — not false precision.

REACH

Are the right people encountering it?

Qualified impressions · search visibility · email delivery and open behaviour

ATTENTION

Was it useful enough to consume?

Engaged visits · scroll depth · saves · replies and forwards

PROGRESS

Did it move anyone forward?

CTA clicks · downloads · return visits · proof and pricing views

OUTCOME

Did it contribute to value?

Enquiries · bookings · sales · retention and repeat work

Work down the list. If *reach* is healthy but *attention* is not, the asset is not useful enough. If *attention* is healthy but *progress* is not, the next step is wrong or invisible. Each gap points at one specific fix.

The 15-minute monthly review

Five questions. Each one ends in a decision, not an observation.

ASK	DECISION
Which assets attracted relevant attention?	Repeat or redistribute
Which generated progress or enquiries?	Strengthen the route
Where did people stop?	Remove friction
What appeared in sales conversations?	Create the next asset
What consumed effort without evidence?	Improve it, or stop

Score three assets

HIGH · MEDIUM · LOW

ASSET	REACH	PROGRESS	OUTCOME	DECISION
				Keep / improve / stop
				Keep / improve / stop
				Keep / improve / stop

IO

Your first 30 days

Build the smallest complete loop before adding volume.

A credible monthly article plus a useful email and two thoughtful adaptations will out-perform an ambitious daily schedule that collapses after three weeks.

WEEK ONE Focus Choose one offer and one audience. Gather ten real questions. OUTPUT Strategy + idea bank	WEEK TWO Create Brief and make one strong source asset, with proof in it. OUTPUT One useful source asset	WEEK THREE Distribute Publish, email, and adapt two complete ideas from it. OUTPUT One asset + three encounters	WEEK FOUR Learn Review signals and conversations. Improve the route. OUTPUT Scorecard + next brief
---	---	--	---

Then: the 20-minute weekly rhythm

SAME SLOT, EVERY WEEK

5 MIN Capture new questions and evidence.	5 MIN Choose the next PACE-qualified idea.	5 MIN Confirm the brief, the proof and the CTA.	5 MIN Review the last asset's signals.
---	--	---	--

Your minimum viable system

The least you can run consistently — and actually will.

PRIORITY AUDIENCE

OFFER SUPPORTED

SOURCE-ASSET FORMAT

PUBLISHING CADENCE

EMAIL CADENCE

PRIMARY OUTCOME

REVIEW DATE

CONTENT THAT CONVERTS

SUSTAINABLE WINS

Choose the cadence you can hold in your worst month, not your best one.

A WORKABLE DEFAULT

- One source asset a month.
- One email every two weeks.
- Two adaptations per asset.
- One review, on a fixed date.

The one-page content strategy

90-DAY BUSINESS OBJECTIVE

PRIORITY AUDIENCE

TRIGGER / URGENT PROBLEM

OFFER TO SUPPORT

CORE CONTENT PROMISE

THREE CONTENT THEMES

SOURCE-ASSET CADENCE

DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS

PRIMARY CALL TO ACTION

PRIMARY OUTCOME MEASURE

CONTENT THAT CONVERTS

START HERE

Take the highest-scoring topic from your PACE shortlist on page 9.

Complete the brief on page 12 before you open a blank document.

PRE-PUBLISH QUALITY GATE

- ☐ **Promise** — useful, specific, accurate.
- ☐ **Substance** — answers it without padding.
- ☐ **Proof** — claims supported; experience visible.
- ☐ **Route** — next step relevant and low friction.
- ☐ **Function** — links, mobile, delivery, tracking.
- ☐ **Ownership** — someone follows up and reviews.

Make one useful thing

Give it a clear job. Put it in front of the right people.
Learn from what happens next. Then do it again.

KEEP LEARNING

Practical guidance on content, SEO, email, local visibility, websites and useful automation for small businesses — without the noise.

WANT IT BUILT FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

This guide gives you the framework. If you would rather skip to a structured discussion about your position and objectives, book a free call.

stevewelshmarketing.com

sales@stevewelshmarketing.com · 07814 558325